



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Agriculture Department issues fines for pesticide violations *Second quarter cases found pesticide label-use violations and a spray drift complaint*

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$1,650 and imposed license suspensions during the second quarter of 2010 for violations of state pesticide laws and rules. Fines ranged from \$350 to \$450 for exposing a farm operator to pesticide drift, damaging an organic alfalfa crop, and selling pesticides without a WSDA pesticide dealer license.

WSDA completed investigations in Benton, Okanogan, Whatcom and Yakima counties. Summaries of the investigation findings below are generally arranged by county. Fines or license suspensions were issued to:

Joshua Williams, Umatilla, Oregon, who works at a farm in the Prosser area, was fined \$450 and his private applicator license was suspended for seven days. While attempting to make a herbicide application to a sweet corn field through a center-pivot irrigation system, Williams accidentally injected the herbicide mix into the wrong center-pivot system that was situated on a field of organic alfalfa. The manifolds to the two irrigation systems, where chemical injection occurs, were close together and not well marked. The irrigation system that received the herbicide solution was not irrigating the organic alfalfa at the time and had no water in it. When the system was eventually charged with water and turned on several days later, the concentrated herbicide solution that was meant to be uniformly applied across the sweet corn field, was discharged mostly onto a small wedge of the organic alfalfa field. Pesticide residues from the mix were also found in other parts of the alfalfa field—prompting the loss of the farmer's organic certification for the alfalfa.

William Lockwood, Okanogan Air Service Inc. WSDA alleged that a pesticide application made by Lockwood to an apple orchard near Omak in September 2009, drifted or was over-sprayed onto an adjacent alfalfa field, contaminating some of the alfalfa and exposing a farm operator who was raking hay in the field. She obtained medical services the same day after experiencing a headache and nausea. The matter was resolved when Lockwood agreed to pay \$350 and have his commercial applicator license suspended for five days.

Paul Kelley, Whatcom County Public Works, Bellingham, had his public operator's license suspended for seven days. Acting on an anonymous tip in November 2009, WSDA found that employees working under Kelley's direction were improperly disposing of pesticide rinsates, wastes and washwater at a county gravel pit, potentially contaminating the site.

Weylin Eldred, Laurel Farm and Western Supply, LLC, Bellingham. WSDA alleged that the store operated by Eldred was selling pesticides without a pesticide dealer license and was not keeping the necessary sales records. The matter was resolved when Eldred agreed to pay \$400.

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Blaine Huck, Yakima, was fined \$450 and his private applicator license was suspended for seven days. In November 2009, Huck made two applications of a rodent bait to his employer's orchard in Naches. The product label required that the two applications be spaced at least a month apart, but Huck started the second application approximately a week after finishing the first application. Several mourning doves died as a result of the applications.

WSDA pesticide compliance, registration, licensing efforts

Last year, WSDA investigated nearly 148 complaints involving pesticide use, sales and distribution; pesticide licensing; and building inspections for wood-destroying organisms. The agency registers more than 11,000 pesticide products, licenses about 22,000 pesticide applicators, dealers, consultants and structural pest inspectors, and investigates complaints of alleged pesticide misuse.

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